

# **Request for expression of Interest**

## **Project Description & Requirements**



# **Honey Creek Resort State Park**

## **Iowa Department of Natural Resources**

October  
2005

# Honey Creek Resort State Park

## Iowa Department of Natural Resources

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## History:

The Conservation and Recreation Division of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) is currently in the process of developing Honey Creek Resort State Park, Iowa's first Destination State Park. It will provide a state-of-the-art conference, education, and recreation facility for extended stay, destination style vacations and conferences. The concept is strongly supported by Governor Tom Vilsack; environmental, recreation and economic development organizations; and state and local officials. Market analyses indicate the market demand for this park is clearly present.

Development plans for the site originally surfaced nearly 30 years ago when the State sought to increase tourism to the area. Phase One of the current process, completed in October 2000, consisted of an initial analysis of destination park feasibility, including a market analysis, user surveys, and an evaluation of potential park sites. The results of the initial analyses were favorable and indicated that a majority of Iowans would not only visit a destination state park, but would be willing to travel three to five hours to reach such a park.

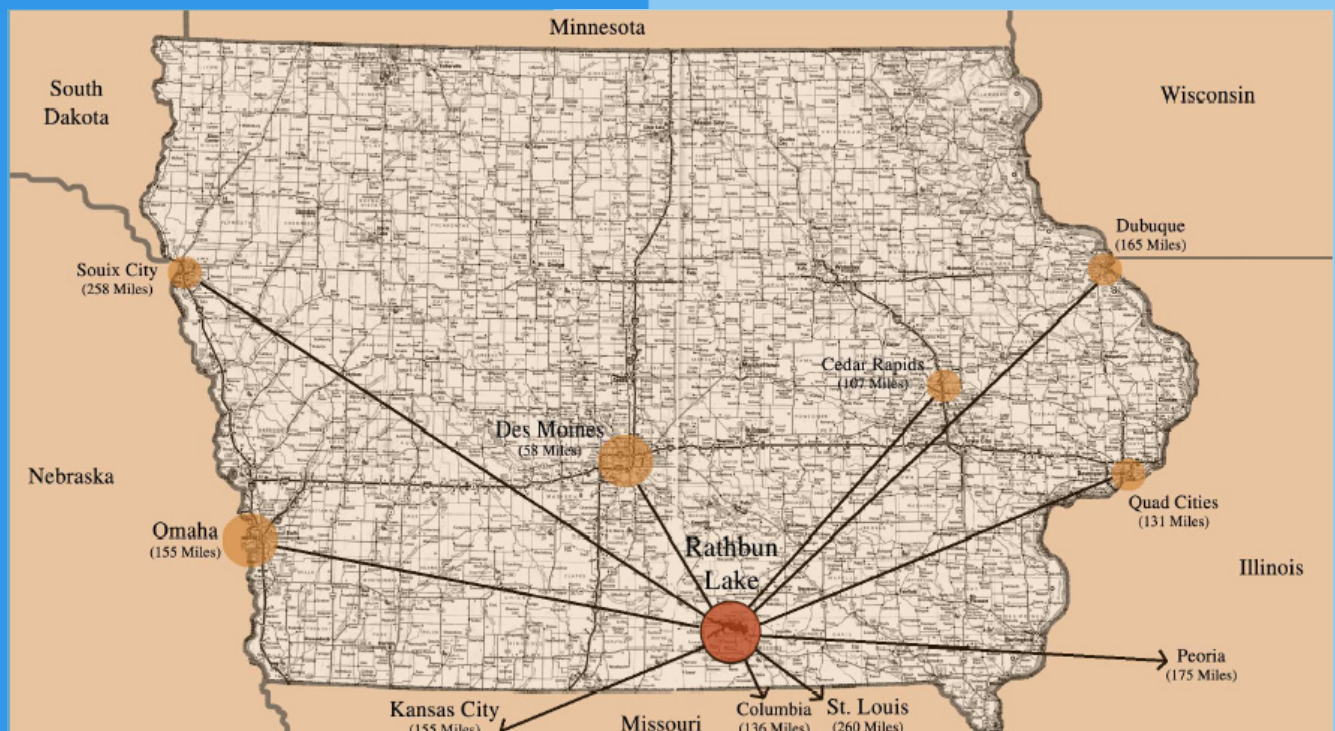
Phase Two of the process, completed in 2001, focused on a more detailed assessment of two preferred sites for destination state parks and the program development for each. The results of the Phase Two study and the overwhelming local support for the project led to a decision by the State to focus

energy on the development of the jointly managed State and U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) land on Rathbun Lake near Centerville, Iowa commonly referred to as "Honey Creek". The land for this project was purchased at the time the Chariton River was dammed by USACE forming Rathbun Lake, an 11,000-acre high-quality reservoir providing flood control, outdoor recreation, and drinking water for over 70,000 customer in southern Iowa and northern Missouri.

Phase Three of the process, completed in July 2002, built on the information generated in the previous two phases, incorporated new information, and created a master plan for the development of the park including the conceptual design and layout of the proposed programmatic elements.

A new primary entrance road (2.1 miles) was constructed, and spur roads, currently under design, will be built in 2006. Hiking Trails (2.5 miles) were constructed in 2004.

Our current goal is to locate a conservation-oriented private development partner to participate with the State of Iowa in the development of financing and phasing packages, and then to design, bid, build and operate all or selected portions of the Honey Creek Resort State Park. IDNR remains flexible to entertain compatible modifications to the planned components and management concepts should these potential modifications make the facilities more user friendly or marketable.



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#### Resources:

The Honey Creek Resort State Park site is located in Appanoose County approximately seven miles west of Moravia, Iowa on the north side of Rathbun Lake in south central Iowa. The site is located within easy driving distance of many Midwestern population centers.

The Park site covers approximately 850 acres and will ultimately be linked by a pedestrian trail and bridge to the existing Honey Creek State Park (also in excess of 800 acres.) The site is comprised of a variety of landscapes and ecosystems including open fields, woodlands, water bodies, and sensitive natural communities. Today, most of the park area is covered by open fields. Its wooded portions include second growth hardwoods.

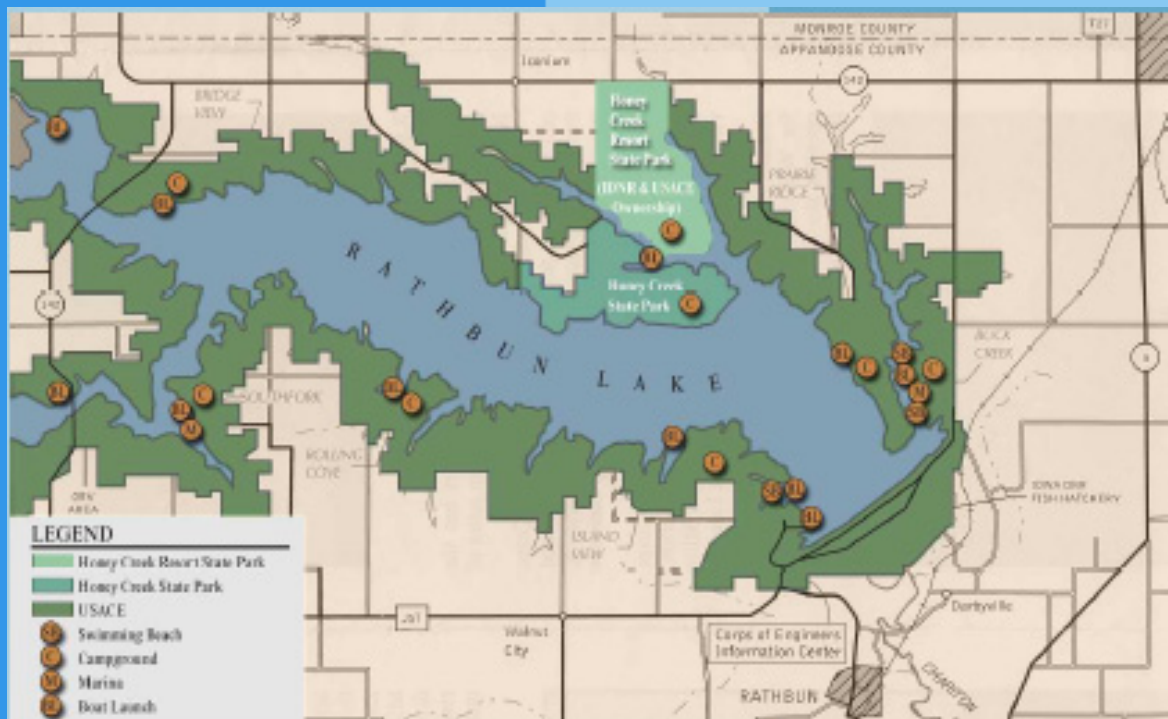
Natural resource surveys of property have identified high quality and unique plant communities and several threatened and endangered species. It is essential that development be confined to approximate areas as illustrated in the honey Creek Master Plan, and that developers share a commitment to protecting the natural features of the site

The Resort Park will provide high quality facilities to

support extended stay vacations and conferences amidst a wealth of rich and diverse natural, cultural, and recreational opportunities. Lodging accommodations are intended to be first class but allow for a range of pricing options (i.e. different types of camping facilities, cabins, and rooms at the lodge).

The proposed Resort Park will complement multiple other recreational areas currently available on Rathbun Lake. There are ten boat ramps, three swimming beaches, two marinas, numerous picnic facilities and over five hundred campsites located in seven additional recreational facilities located on Rathbun Lake.

The intended style of use and target audience for the Honey Creek Resort State Park differs from the existing Honey Creek State Park. Located directly south of the proposed resort state park, the existing Honey Creek State Park caters to a more traditional day-use recreation and campground user by providing facilities that include 150 year-round modern campsites, four camper cabins, picnic areas, trails and a recently expanded major boat launch facility.



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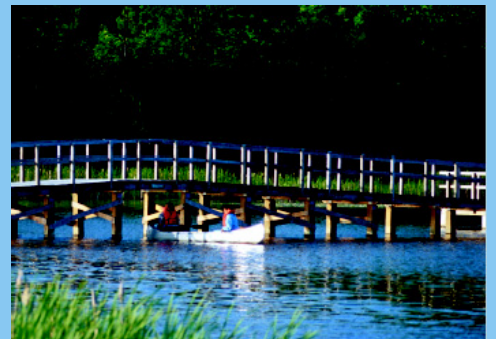
## Facilities

- 108-room lodge with restaurant and lounge overlooking Rathbun Lake.
- 15,000 square-foot indoor family aquatic center.
- 5,000 square-foot conference/retreat center.
- 18-hole golf course/club house.
- 37 family and group cabins.
- Upscale 20-30 site RV campground, full service utility hook-ups.
- Multi-purpose and hiking trails (2.5 miles built in 2004).
- Enclosed picnic shelters for family and group gatherings.
- Activity center building.
- Guest boat ramp and docking facilities.
- Pedestrian bridge to facilitate access between the existing Honey Creek State Park and the new Resort Park.

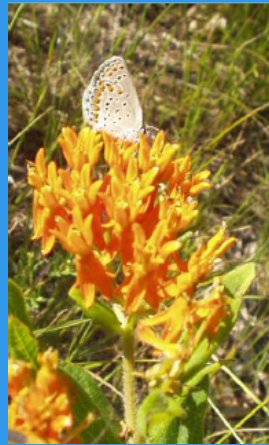
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## Programs:

- Rural Leadership and Entrepreneurial Institute operated by Indian Hills Community College and located within the conference wing of the complex.
- Iowa Senior College and Elder Hostel programs.
- Interpretive programs highlighting Iowa's natural heritage including prairie communities, wetland resources, southern Iowa ecosystems, and other topics to be presented by IDNR-staff naturalists.
- Interpretive programs on Iowa's cultural heritage including the history and arts of Southern Iowa.
- Full range of conferences and retreats.
- Family vacation packages, including fishing, boating, golfing, swimming, and touring in southern Iowa to experience nearby natural, historical, cultural, dining and eco-tourism attractions.
- Local theater productions.
- Wide variety of special events, including but not limited to arts and craft shows, hunting and fishing swap meets, antique shows, waterfowl migration viewing, canoe/kayak outings, etc.



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## Environment:

The Resort Park is intended to exemplify a sustainable approach to development, by protecting the natural environment of both the site itself and the neighboring Rathbun Lake. Facilities at the resort park are to be constructed utilizing appropriately “green” materials and sustainable approaches that conserve energy and promote ecological stewardship. Facilities developed should comply with U.S. Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) requirements for certification. It is anticipated that a certification at/or above the “silver” level should be attained for key facilities. It is envisioned that the park will also stimulate spin-off enterprises and programs, putting it at the forefront of the emerging envirotech and ecotourism industries.

### Natural Resource Management

Stewardship Plans - The Iowa Department of Natural Resources will develop prairie establishment and controlled burn specifications, wetland monitoring programs, slope revegetation and erosion control methods, and wildlife habitat management strategies.

Water Quality Monitoring and Best Management Practices for Stormwater - Rathbun Lake, in addition to providing an outstanding recreational and natural resource base for southern Iowa, serves as the source of drinking water for tens of thousands of Iowans. It is essential that runoff from the park site be minimized and that any potentially harmful contaminants entering the lake be kept to an absolute minimum. This may affect design and placement of buildings, location and size of ponds, use of chemicals, ground cover and plantings, golf course design and management, and any other practices that would impact the quantity and quality of runoff into Rathbun Lake.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program-An IPM Plan and program that reflects ecosystem-based strategies will be established and followed within the park, including the golf course.

Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program (ACSP) - The golf course will be designed to receive an ACSP certification. Further information is available at [www.audubonintl.org/programs/acss/golf.htm](http://www.audubonintl.org/programs/acss/golf.htm)

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## Partnerships:

The State of Iowa and the Federal Government (US Army Corps of Engineers) will provide most of the overall development costs. The Rathbun Regional Water Association will provide water supply infrastructure. The Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative will provide electrical infrastructure.

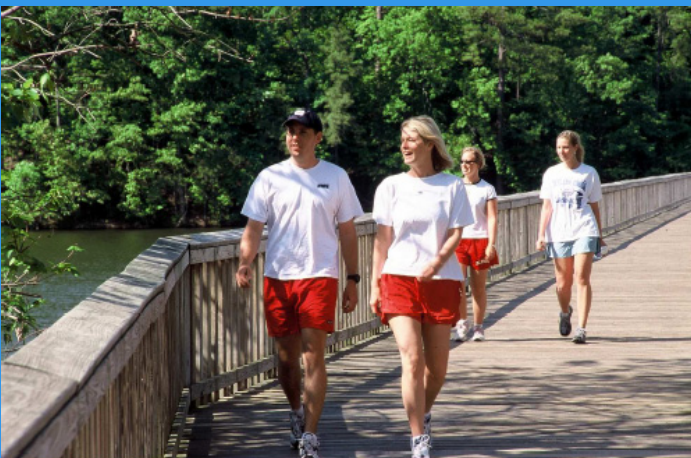
Indian Hills Community College has committed to operating and staffing the "Rural Leadership and Entrepreneurship Center" to be housed within the conference wing of the lodge complex. This facility will meet an identified high priority need for rural Iowa and will also help to assure a flow of lodge and restaurant customers during the "shoulder" and off-season times of the year. Jim Lindenmayer, President of Indian Hills Community College, describes the Center as able to combine the "business, cultural, and natural resource components of this project, and provide a truly powerful model for the State of Iowa, and perhaps the nation."

## Public and Private Facilities

Although there remains flexibility to accommodate modifications, the following summary identifies the likely public/private sharing of Resort Park development components. Facilities which will be publicly developed and/or operated include: trails, roads, wastewater system, and connecting bridge between Honey Creek State Park and the resort complex.

Facilities, which are to be privately developed and/or operated, include: Lodge/restaurant/lounge, aquatic center, activity center building, 18-hole golf course, family cabins, maintenance complex, and RV campground. These facilities will be built on publicly owned lands under formal, negotiated agreements with the State of Iowa for terms that are consistent with private and public sector needs.

Important supporting amenities may or may not be incorporated in the privately constructed and operated segment of the project. These include boat launching/guest docking/boat rental facilities, beach, enclosed picnic shelters and other compatible and agree-upon facilities.



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**Submittal Contact:**

The above material described in section 2.1 shall be submitted to:

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*"Courtesy of Prairie Dunes Golf Course"*